

X. COMMERCIAL

Goal: Support existing businesses and provide an energetic business environment for new commercial activity providing a range of service, office, commercial, and mixed use residential uses that enhance the City's employment and tax base along arterial boulevards and in designated development areas.

Discussion: There are three commercial designations:

- 1) Commercial Corridor;
- 2) Commercial/Office/Residential; and
- 3) Commercial Neighborhood.

These commercial areas range from intense retail corridors to major office parks to neighborhood scale business districts. Many commercial areas are located along arterials where the high volumes of daily traffic provide a substantial customer base.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR LAND USE DESIGNATION

Purpose Statement: The Commercial Corridor district is characterized by concentrated, pre-existing commercial activity, primarily in a linear urban form, that provides necessary goods and services for daily living, accessible to near-by neighborhoods, serving a sub-regional market and accommodating large volumes of traffic.

It is the intention of City objectives and policies that Commercial Corridor areas evolve from "strip commercial" linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities, and boulevard treatment. Commercial Corridor areas may include designated districts including concentrations of specialized uses such as the Auto Mall, or features such as transit stops and a combination of businesses creating a focal point of pedestrian activity and visual interest.

Commercial Corridor areas are characterized by medium intensity levels of activity. It is anticipated, however, that intensity levels in these areas will increase over time as development of vacant space occurs, increased land value makes redevelopment feasible, and land is used more efficiently. In these districts, provision of pedestrian amenities is encouraged, as are opportunities to link adjacent uses and neighborhoods.

Objective LU-DDD: The Commercial Corridor land use designation should include:

- 1) Established commercial and office areas;
- 2) Developments located on large parcels of land;
- 3) Projects that may be highly visible from principal arterials;
- 4) Uses dependent upon or benefiting from high-volume traffic;
- 5) Uses that provide significant employment; and

- 6) Businesses that provide necessary or desirable goods and services to the larger community.

Policy LU-333. The Commercial Corridor Land Use designation should be mapped in areas with the following characteristics:

- 1) Located on, and having access to, streets classified as principal arterials;
- 2) High traffic volumes; or
- 3) Land use pattern characterized by strip commercial development, shopping centers, or office parks.

Policy LU-334. The Commercial Corridor designation should be implemented through Commercial Arterial, Commercial Office, or Light Industrial zoning.

Policy LU-335. Increased demand for commercial uses should be accommodated primarily through redevelopment and intensification of existing business area designations rather than expansion of those areas.

Objective LU-EEE: Create opportunities for development and re-development of land in portions of the Commercial Corridor designation for general business and service uses. These include a wide range of restaurant, small-scale to big-box retail, offices, auto dealers, light industrial, and residential uses.

Policy LU-336. Portions of the Commercial Corridor designation appropriate for a wide range of uses catering to low and medium intensity office, service, and retail uses should be mapped with Commercial Arterial zoning.

Policy LU-337. Areas that should be considered for Commercial Arterial zoning should meet the following criteria:

- 1) The corridor is served by transit or has transit within one-quarter mile;
- 2) A historical strip commercial urban development pattern predominates;
- 3) Large, surface parking lots exist;
- 4) Primary development on the site is located at rear portions of the property with parking in front of the buildings;
- 5) Parcel size and configuration typically is defined by a larger parcel fronting the arterial street with multiple buildings and businesses; and
- 6) The corridor exhibits long block lengths and/or an incomplete grid street network.

Policy LU-338. Commercial Arterial zoned areas should include an opportunity for residential uses and office as part of mixed-use development.

Objective LU-FFF: Create opportunities for intensive office uses in portions of Commercial Corridor designations including a wide range of business, financial, and professional services supported by service and commercial/retail activities.

Policy LU-339. Areas of the City identified for intensive office use may be mapped with Commercial Office implementing zoning when site is developed, historically used for office, or the site meets the following criteria:

- 1) Site is located contiguous to an existing or planned transit route;
- 2) Large parcel size;
- 3) High visibility; and
- 4) Opportunities for views.

Policy LU-340. Small-scale medical uses associated with major institutions should be located in the portions of Commercial Corridor designated areas with Commercial Office zoning, in the Urban Center, or in the Employment Area – Valley.

Policy LU-341. Retirement centers that have a medical facility as a component of the services offered should be located in areas of the Commercial Corridor that have Commercial Office zoning.

Policy LU-342. Medium and high intensity office should be encouraged as the primary use in Commercial Office zoned areas.

Policy LU-343. Retail and services should support the primary office use in areas identified for Commercial Office zoning, and should be located on the ground floor of office and parking structures.

Policy LU-344. In the Commercial Office zone, high-rise office development should be limited to ten (10) stories. Fifteen (15) stories may be obtained through a height bonus system.

Policy LU-345. Height bonuses of five (5) stories may be allowed for office buildings in designated areas of the Commercial Office zone, under appropriate conditions, where sites provide additional public benefits such as plazas, parks, exceptional landscaping, and/or public art.

Objective LU-GGG: Guide redevelopment of land in the Commercial Corridor designation with Commercial Arterial zoning, from the existing strip commercial forms into more concentrated forms, in which structures and parking evolve from the existing suburban form, to more efficient urban configurations with cohesive site planning.

Policy LU-346. Support the redevelopment of commercial business districts located along principal arterials in the City.

Policy LU-347. Implement development standards that encourage lively, attractive, medium to high-density commercial areas.

Policy LU-348. Encourage consolidation of individual parcels to maximize flexibility of site design and reduce access points.

Policy LU-349. Support development plans incorporating the following features:

- 1) Shared access points and fewer curb cuts;
- 2) Internal circulation among adjacent parcels;
- 3) Shared parking facilities;
- 4) Allowance for future transition to structured parking facilities;
- 5) Centralized signage;
- 6) Unified development concepts; and
- 7) Landscaping and streetscape that softens visual impacts.

Policy LU-350. New development in Commercial Corridor designated areas should be encouraged to implement uniform site standards, including:

- 1) Minimum lot depth of 200 feet;
- 2) Maximum height of ten (10) stories within office zoned designations;
- 3) Parking preferably at the rear of the building, or on the side as a second choice;
- 4) Setbacks that would allow incorporating a landscape buffer;
- 5) Front setback without frontage street or driveway between building and sidewalk; and
- 6) Common signage and lighting system.

Policy LU-351. Identify and map activity nodes located along principal arterials that are the foundation of the Corridors, and guide the development or redevelopment of these nodes as activity areas for the larger corridors so that they enhance their function.

Policy LU-352. Development within defined activity nodes should be subject to additional design guidelines as delineated in the development standards.

Policy LU-353. Structures at Commercial Corridor intersections should not be set back from the street and sidewalk so as to allow vehicular circulation or parking to be located between the sidewalk and the building.

Policy LU-354. Commercial Corridor intersections frequented by pedestrians, due to the nature of nearby uses or transit stops, should feature sidewalk pavement increased to form pedestrian corners and include pedestrian amenities, signage, and special design treatment that would make them identifiable as activity areas for the larger corridor.

Policy LU-355. Parking at designated intersections should be in back of structures and not located between structures and the sidewalk or street.

Policy LU-356. Structures in Commercial Corridor areas that front sidewalks abutting the principal arterial or are located at activity nodes should be eligible for a height bonus and therefore may exceed the maximum allowable height in the district.

Policy LU-357. Public amenity features (e.g. plazas, recreation areas) should be encouraged as part of new development or redevelopment.

Policy LU-358. Parking areas should be landscaped (including street trees, buffers, berms), especially along roadways, to reduce visual impacts.

Objective LU-HHH: Support methods of increasing accessibility to Commercial Corridor areas for both automobile and transit to support the land use objectives of the district.

Policy LU-359. Support routing of the citywide transit system to Commercial Corridor areas to provide greater access.

Policy LU-360. Encourage development proponents to work with the City Transportation Division, King County METRO, and Sound Transit in order to site transit stops within the Commercial Corridor areas.

Policy LU-361. Public transportation transit stops located in Commercial Corridor areas should be safe, clean, comfortable, and attractive.

Objective LU-III: Ensure quality development in Commercial Office zones.

Policy LU-362. Office sites and structures should be designed (e.g. signage; building height, bulk and setback; landscaping; parking) to mitigate adverse impacts on adjacent land uses.

Policy LU-363. Parking provided on-site, in parking structures, and either buffered from adjacent uses or incorporated into pedestrian-oriented street design, is preferred.

Policy LU-364. In areas developed with high intensity office uses, circulation within the site should be primarily pedestrian-oriented.

Policy LU-365. In areas developed with high intensity office uses, vehicular access to the site should be from the primary street with the access points minimized and designed to ease entrance and exit.

Policy LU-366. Public amenity features (e.g. parks, plazas, recreation areas) should be encouraged (i.e. through incentives or similar means) as part of every high-intensity office development.

Policy LU-367. In areas developed with high intensity office uses, site and building design should be transit-, people-, and pedestrian-oriented. Ground floor uses and design should be pedestrian-oriented.

Objective LU-JJJ: Where Commercial Corridor areas intersect other land use designations, recognition of a transition and/or buffer between uses should be incorporated into redevelopment plans.

Policy LU-368. Consideration of the scale and building style of near-by residential neighborhoods should be included in development proposals.

Policy LU-369. Development should be designed to consider potential adverse impacts on adjacent, less intensive uses, e.g. lighting, landscaping, and setbacks should all be considered during site design.

Policy LU-370. Landscape buffers, additional setbacks, reduced height, and screening devices such as berms and fencing should be employed to reduce impacts (e.g. visual, noise, odor, light) on adjacent, less intensive uses.

Renton Auto Mall

Discussion: *The Renton Auto Mall is intended to serve several purposes on behalf of the City and business community. It increases vehicle sales and corresponding tax revenue returned to the City. It has special development standards that are predictable, cohesive, and uniform throughout the District.*

It is easily accessible from regional interstate transportation systems, and improves and increases values of underdeveloped property. The Auto Mall, by providing a District for this concentrated activity, allows land that might otherwise be used for vehicle sales and service to be reutilized more efficiently in other Districts, such as the Urban Center.

Additional benefits may accrue to both City residents and people on a regional basis due to the opportunity to comparison shop and conveniently participate in activities related to auto sales and service.

Objective LU-KKK: Provide support for a cohesive Commercial Corridor District specifically for the concentration of auto- and vehicular-related businesses in order to increase their revenue and the sales tax base for the City.

Policy LU-371. The Renton Auto Mall should be primarily located along SW Grady Way, between Oakesdale Ave. S.W. and Williams Ave. S., but may be expanded beyond this area as warranted.

Policy LU-372. The objectives and policies of the Commercial Corridor designation should be implemented by Commercial Arterial (CA) zoning within Auto Mall District A and by the underlying zoning in Auto Mall District B.

Objective LU-LLL: In order to further the continued cohesiveness of the Auto Mall Improvement District, a right-of-way improvement plan should be completed, adopted, and implemented by the City in coordination with property owners and auto dealers.

Policy LU-373. The coordinated right-of-way improvement plan should address area gateways, signage, landscaping, circulation, and shared access.

Policy LU-374. A designated gateway to the Auto Mall District should be made visually distinctive through the use of gateway features.

Policy LU-375. In order to facilitate the consolidation of land into a cohesive district, fees and other compensation normally levied for street right-of-way vacation should be waived.

Objective LU-MMM: Auto Mall Improvement District development standards, site planning, and project review should further the goal of the City to present an attractive environment for doing regional-scale, auto-related business.

Policy LU-376. Landscaping along principal arterials should be uniform from parcel to parcel in order to further the visual cohesiveness of the District.

Policy LU-377. On-site landscaping should consist of a minimum two and one half percent (2.5%) of the gross site area.

Policy LU-378. On-site landscaping should primarily be located at site entries, in front of buildings, and at other locations with high visibility from public areas.

Policy LU-379. Vehicle service areas should not be readily visible from public rights-of-way.

Objective LU-NNN: Use of the Auto Mall District by pedestrians should be encouraged by improving safety and creating an attractive, “walkable” business environment.

Policy LU-380. Designated walkways should be part of a larger network of pedestrian connections between businesses throughout the district.

Policy LU-381. To enhance use of the Auto Mall Improvement District by pedestrians the following features should be used:

- Wheel stops or curbs placed to prevent overhang of sidewalks by vehicle bumpers.
- Customer parking located and clearly marked near site entries.
- Coordinated dealer-to-dealer signage should be developed.

~~NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor~~

~~Discussion:~~ *The NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor is unique in the City due to the highly eclectic mix of commercial and residential uses along its length. These integrated uses, located at a “gateway” to the City, are an appropriate signal to those entering Renton that the community is diverse in many ways. Height limitations in the Development Standards have kept buildings along the NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor at two stories or below, a scale that is generally consistent with the various forms of residential along the corridor.*

~~Objective LU-000:~~ *A special district should be designated along NE Sunset Boulevard. The purpose of this area would be to make the commercial environment more attractive to local and sub-regional shoppers so that local businesses will be more economically viable and the City’s tax base will increase. Implementing code will be put in place within three years of the adoption date for the GMA update.*

~~Policy LU-382.~~ *Within the NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor, a “Business District” should include the commercial properties along NE Sunset Blvd. from Duvall Ave. N.E. to west of Union Ave. N.E.*

~~**Policy LU-383.** The NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor, due to its location on the east boundary of the City, should include City gateway features.~~

~~**Policy LU-384.** The NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor, due to its location abutting Highlands Neighborhood Center, should be considered a gateway to that district and feature design elements that are coordinated with, and reflect the nature of the Highlands Center Village.~~

~~**Policy LU-385.** The policies of the Commercial Corridor designation and the NE Sunset Boulevard Corridor should be implemented by Commercial Arterial (CA) zoning.~~

~~**Policy LU-386.** Vehicle sales businesses existing in the NE Sunset Boulevard Business Corridor should be encouraged to relocate to the Renton Auto Mall District.~~

~~**Northeast Fourth Corridor**~~

~~***Discussion:** The Northeast Fourth Corridor is an active commercial area located at a gateway to the City. It features a wide variety of retail and service uses and several different structural forms from small professional offices to large scale strip malls with major grocery anchors.*~~

~~*Annexations of land into the City to the east of this commercial area and subsequent development of large single family housing projects has increased the market area for the Northeast Fourth Corridor considerably in recent years.*~~

~~**Objective LU-PPP:** A special commercial area should be designated along Northeast Fourth Street. The purpose of this area would be to enhance the commercial environment to increase revenue of local businesses and the City's tax base.~~

~~**Policy LU-387.** Within the Northeast Fourth Corridor, the "Business District" should be bounded by Queen Avenue NE (on the west) and Field Ave N.E. (on the east).~~

~~**Policy LU-388.** The policies of the Commercial Corridor designation and the Northeast Fourth Corridor Business District should be implemented by Commercial Arterial (CA) zoning.~~

~~**Objective LU-QQQ:** The Northeast Fourth Corridor Business District should be enhanced to improve efficiency, safety and attractiveness to both potential shoppers and pass-through traffic.~~

~~**Policy LU-389.** Due to its location at a key entrance to the City from the east, the Northeast Fourth Corridor Business District should include gateway features.~~

~~**Policy LU-390.** The Northeast Fourth Business District should be enhanced with boulevard design features such as landscaped center of road medians for the purpose of~~

~~improving safety through traffic control and slowing traffic for pedestrian safety and improved conditions for vehicles leaving and entering the principal arterial.~~

~~**Policy LU-391.** To the extent possible, undeveloped parcels and pads and/or redevelopment in the Northeast Fourth Corridor Business District should feature street-facing building facades located a maximum of fifteen (15) feet setback from the non-curb edge of sidewalks abutting the principal arterial.~~

~~**Policy LU-392.** In the Northeast Fourth Business Corridor Business District, where buildings are set back more than fifteen (15) feet from the principal arterial, new development or redevelopment should:~~

- ~~1) Contribute a furnished public gathering space, abutting the sidewalk along the principal arterial, of no less than 1,000 square feet with a minimum dimension of twenty (20) feet on one side. Such space should have landscaping, including street trees, decorative paving, pedestrian scaled lighting and seating, at a minimum.~~
- ~~2) Designate appropriate site(s) for future pad development for additional commercial structures located to conform to maximum setback requirements.~~

Rainier Avenue Corridor

~~***Discussion:** The Rainier Avenue Corridor is one of the most commercially viable areas of the City. Redevelopment of infrastructure and businesses in the Rainier Corridor would present the opportunity to strengthen the transition between the Corridor, a major transportation route through the west part of the City, and the Urban Center. Changes of this nature could increase the economic vitality of Renton's Downtown.*~~

~~**Objective LU-RRR:** A special district should be designated along Rainier Avenue. The purposes of this district would be to enhance the commercial environment in order to increase revenue of local businesses and the City's tax base, and to enhance the residential market with high-density mixed-use projects in order to increase residential opportunities in the City.~~

~~**Policy LU-393.** Within the Rainier Avenue Corridor, the "Business District" should be bounded to the north by Airport Way, on the east and west side of Rainier Avenue and bounded to the south by the Houser railroad trestle where it abuts the Auto Mall District.~~

~~**Policy LU-394.** The policies of the Commercial Corridor designation and the Rainier Avenue Corridor Business District should be implemented by Commercial Arterial (CA) zoning.~~

~~**Policy LU-395.** Uses in the Rainier Avenue Corridor should be primarily retail-oriented, and may have an emphasis on providing goods on a high volume, vehicle accessed basis, but should also provide high quality and specialty goods.~~

~~**Policy LU-395a.** Residential use should be limited to retail/office/residential mixed-use buildings that enhance the viability of the commercial environment and provide high-quality housing opportunities.~~

~~**Objective LU-SSS:** Due to the nature of the retail core business in the Rainier Avenue Corridor, vehicular access and egress safety should be a primary consideration.~~

~~**Policy LU-396.** In the Rainier Avenue Corridor access points to businesses fronting the principal arterial should be consolidated if at all possible and curb cuts reduced wherever feasible.~~

~~**Policy LU-397.** Business signs in the Rainier Avenue Corridor should be uniform in size, content, and location to reduce visual clutter. Monument signs are the preferred type.~~

~~**Policy LU-398.** New billboard signs should be disallowed in the Rainier Avenue Corridor Business District due to the large scale of the signs in relation to the scale of the district. Existing signs should be well maintained so that visual impact is reduced.~~

~~**Objective LU-TTT:** The Rainier Avenue Corridor Business District should be enhanced to improve efficiency, safety and attractiveness to both potential shoppers and pedestrians using the public transportation system.~~

~~**Policy LU-399.** In the Rainier Avenue Corridor Business District, due to significant pedestrian use of the intersections of Rainier Avenue and Sunset Boulevard/South Third Street, Rainier Avenue and South Third Place, and Rainier Avenue and South Fourth Street, sidewalk widths at these locations should be increased to create pedestrian corners whenever redevelopment occurs. Pavement should be increased for added pedestrian safety.~~

~~**Policy LU-400.** On corners having high volume pedestrian traffic, the paved sidewalk area should be increased in size. This may require a larger building setback at the corners of buildings when building facades abut the sidewalk.~~

~~**Policy LU-401.** Pedestrian corners should include urban street furniture such as benches, an information kiosk, and a trash receptacle.~~

~~**Policy LU-402.** Rainier Avenue should be improved with landscaped median and additional street trees to improve safety and appearance.~~

~~**Policy LU-403.** Property owners and business owners should be encouraged to provide awnings or other weather protection on facades of buildings fronting sidewalks.~~

~~**Objective LU-UUU:** The Rainier Avenue Corridor Business District is one of the busiest arterials in the City and is located as a gateway to the City from both the south~~

~~and north. The design, function, and configuration of the District should reflect its status as a key gateway.~~

~~**Policy LU-404.** The Rainier Avenue Corridor should feature gateway elements to the extent made possible by redevelopment.~~

~~**Policy LU-405.** Signage in the Rainier Avenue Corridor Business District should include high quality City directional signs to the Urban Center, City Hall, IKEA Performing Arts Center, Piazza Park, City parking garage, library, museum, and other prominent public destinations.~~